



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

November 17, 2017

Former ETSU Tennis Coach Indicted for Theft and Forgery

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office has released an investigation that has resulted in the indictment of Yaser Zaatini, the former Director of Tennis and coach at East Tennessee State University (ETSU). The investigation was initiated after the ETSU Department of Internal Audit reported financial discrepancies in the tennis program.

Investigators determined that from September 2011 through February 2017, Zaatini misappropriated at least \$45,540 from ETSU and often provided fabricated or altered documents to the ETSU Athletics Department. Zaatini used a variety of methods to misappropriate the money.



Zaatini fabricated and submitted at least 65 fraudulent student athlete per diem documents, which often appeared to contain copies of student athletes' signatures. The student athletes told investigators that they had neither signed the documents nor received the per diem payments. Zaatini received money to which he was not entitled.

Investigators also revealed that Zaatini fabricated at least 67 fraudulent documents for reimbursement claiming that he paid for tennis racquets to be restrung while traveling with the team. Investigators determined that Zaatini never incurred or paid these expenses.

Additionally, Zaatini inflated the amounts he paid for tournament registration fees, and he fabricated and submitted fraudulent petty cash documents to obtain student athlete meal money from ETSU.

Zaatini told university officials that he used the misappropriated money to fund the tennis program, but investigators could not find any evidence that the funds Zaatini fraudulently obtained by creating false documents benefited the ETSU tennis program in any way.

The investigation also found that Zaatini failed to report at least 10 days of leave that he used in 2016 at a cost to the university of \$3,787. An internal audit revealed that Zaatini failed to report any leave during a nine-year period ending in 2014.

Yaser Zaatini resigned from ETSU on March 16, 2017. On November 3, 2017, Zaatini was indicted by the Washington County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$10,000 and 22 counts of forgery.

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| The logo for Washington County (WF) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). |
| STRINGING LABOR |
| Amount: <u>\$280</u> |
| Date: <u>5/14/16</u> |
| TEAM: <u>ETSU</u> |

Fraudulent Racquet Stringing Fee Invoice

"Travel reimbursements must always be carefully scrutinized," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "When

documents appear suspicious, it's important to ask additional questions.”

To view the investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of public money in Tennessee, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at (800) 232-5454, or file a report online at: www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline. Follow us on twitter [@TNCOT](https://twitter.com/TNCOT)

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